

THE LITERARY MIRROR.

VOL. 1.]

SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1808.

[NO. 31.]

Sweet flowers and fruits from fair Parvatus' mount,
And varied knowledge from rich Science' fount,
We hither bring.

Miscellany.

FROM THE FORT FOLIO.

A TREATISE

ON ORIENTAL POETRY.

[CONTINUED.]

AFTER having made these few remarks upon the Oriental images, it will be proper to say something of the figures which they produce. We will not enlarge upon the simple metaphors, as the dew of liberality, the sweet flavour of reputation, since not only the writings of the orientals are filled with them, but they are also common among other nations. The Asiatic similitudes are in general very fine and very striking, as that of violets sparkling with dew; the blue eyes of a beautiful girl in tears; of a warrior advancing at the head of his troops, with an Eagle cleaving the air and piercing the clouds with his impetuous wings;* but we ought not to omit a noble train of comparisons which an Arabian Poet makes in the description of the horse, the greatest part of which are grand and sublime in the highest degree. He compares the hair which falls upon the forehead of his coursers to the locks of a maiden dishevelled by the wind: his back, to a rock which has been polished by a torrent, which falls incessantly; his tail, to that of the robe of a bride, which negligently droops; his sides, to those of a Leopard, his neck, to the high Palmtree under which the Traveller lights a fire in the hope of suc-

* They compare the foreheads of their mistresses to the morning, their locks to the night, their faces to the sun, to the moon, or the blossoms of Jessamine, their cheeks to roses or ripe fruit, their teeth to pearls, hail stones and snow drops, their eyes so the flowers of the Narcissus, their curled hair to black Scorpions, and to Hyacinths, their lips to rubies or wine, the form of their breasts to pomegranates, and the whiteness of them to snow, their shape to that of Pine trees, and their stature to that of a cypress, a palm tree or a javelin, &c.

cess; his front, to the relievo of a shield which the Artist has made round and even; his nostrils, to the den of the Hyena; the hair of his legs, to the feathers of a black Eagle disordered by the wind; his pace to the swiftness of a Roebuck who deceives the address of the Hunter; his gallop, to a cloud which passes swiftly over one valley to shed its rain upon another, his form, to that of a green grasshopper arising from a marsh.

The Allegory or chain of metaphors is very common among the Persian and Turkish authors, as for example, "When the whirlwind of fear had torn the sail of their understanding, and the deluge of despair had sunk the vessel of their hope, that they might be able to emerge from the gulph of danger, and arrive at the port of safety, they turned the helm of flight and unfurled the sails of precipitate retreat."

As to the mystical allegories and concealed sense which some writers pretend to have in the love poems of the Persians, what they say concerning them is so incredible and so absurd, that it is useless to support the subject. Let the reader judge if the following ode can have any other meaning than that which it obviously presents.

"It is now the season of Roses, my companions let us abandon our hearts to joy. This is the advice of Sages and old men: let us no longer differ from it. At present, all is gay, but the lovely season quickly passes away. Let us sell the Sacred carpets upon which we kneel down to pray, and let us buy wine. The air is sweet, and invites to pleasure: Oh Heaven! send us some lively and wanton Beauties, with whom we may drink the rose coloured wine.

String the lyre. Fortune abuses worthy men; But, since we condemn her, why should we not enjoy ourselves?

The Roses flourish around us, Let us fill, let us fill with this agreeable liquor,

That we may extinguish the flames of Love and desire which consume us.

Oh Hafiz! It would be strange that some one could say, that we who are Nightingales remain silent during the season of Roses."

The last strophe makes an allusion to the custom which the Persian po-

ets have to compare themselves always to the Nightingale, and to the Fable so well known in the east of the amors of the Nightingale and the Rose.

The light and playful tone which presides in this ode, certainly does not agree with the ideas of piety and devotion which many commentators are willing to draw from the Allegories upon the sensual pleasures.

The Asiatick poets love, in the utmost degree, to personify abstract terms, and to endow inanimate beings with the voice of reason. They are particularly pleased to address themselves to insensible objects, to call them to sympathize in their pains or to partake of their joy, in ordering them to carry their messages to those whom they love; in comparing their beauties and perfections to the charms with which they are smitten, as Hafiz does in this elegant ode.

"Oh sweet Zephyr! thou brightest with thee, the balmy odour of the object of my love, from whom thou hast received this scent of musk;

But take heed, do not steal, what hast thou to do with her beautiful tresses?

Oh rose! what art thou when compared to her brilliant face? she is musk itself, and thou art clothed with thorns.

Oh Florid buds! what are ye when compared to her cheeks? they are always fresh, and ye quickly pass away.

Oh Narcissus! how art thou to be compared to her languishing eyes, which dart the sweet rays of love? thou art pale and extinguished.

Oh Pine! which waviest in our Gardens, what comparison is there betwixt thee and her stature?

Oh my Soul! what would'st thou choose, if to choose were in thy power, in preference to her love?

Come dear object of my love, come, rejoice by thy charming presence the afflicted Hafiz, if it be only for a day*.

* This little Song is not unlike a Sonnet ascribed to Shakespeare, which deserves to be cited here as a proof that the Eastern imagery is not so different from the European as we are apt to imagine.

The forward violet thus did I chide:

"Sweet thief! whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,

If not from my love's breath? The purple pride, Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells, In my Love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed."

The lily I condemned for thy hand, And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair; The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,

After this short review of the oriental poetry in general we will consider it in the different subjects of which it treats, and which produce these six heads, Military virtues, Love, Grief, Instruction, Censure, and Praise.—The author flatters himself that it will not be impossible for him to accommodate the sentiments and expressions of the Orientals to the heart and ear of the Europeans; above all, when he reflects that the poetical passages of the Sacred Writings are regarded as comprehending the greatest beauties; that what we most admire in Shakspeare and Spencer are their exalted and sometimes gigantic images: in fine, that the writings of Pindar, and the precious fragments of the Lyrical poets which remain to us, have been the admiration of all ages, and have the strongest resemblance to the Arabian and Persian Poetry. It is, nevertheless, true, that in the Oriental compositions there are beauties which cannot be discerned in a literal translation, any more than the graces of the Greek Poems can be in the Latin versions; they both then, rather resemble the extravagant ideas and incoherence of Lunatics.

Notwithstanding these encomiums upon the Asiatic works, our design is not to deogate from the merit of the Greek poets; on the contrary, we believe that the excellencies of the former, consist principally in their resemblance to the latter. But it is so natural to write with zeal and vivacity, upon that branch of Literature in which we have good fortune to make the first considerable discoveries.

It is a surprising truth that the European poetry has subsisted so long a time with the perpetual repetition of the same images, and the continual allusion to the same fables with which we are obliged to fill our compositions, because from infancy our memory is charged with them, from having read only the same authors and the works of three thousand years.

If the precious volumes of the Orientals which are preserved in the in-

One blushing shame, another white despair:
A child, nor red, nor white, had stol'n of both;
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth,
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But scent or colour it had stol'n from thee.

Shakspeare's Poems.

valuable Libraries of Paris, Leyden, Oxford, Vienna, and Madrid were published with the customary advantages of notes and explications; if the Oriental languages were taught in our Universities, in place of that art which Locke and Lord Chancellor Bacon regarded as so useless, a new field would be opened for our contemplation; we should penetrate further into the history of the human heart; our mind would be provided with a new collection of images and comparisons: we should find many excellent compositions make their appearance upon which future Critics might exercise themselves, and which succeeding poets might imitate.

The difference between true and false Politeness.

IT is evident enough, that the moral and christian duty, of preferring one another in honour respects only social peace and charity, and terminates in the good and edification of our christian brother. Its use is, to soften the minds of men, and to draw them from their savage rusticity which engenders many vices, and discredits the virtues themselves. But when men had experienced the benefit of this complying temper, and further saw the ends, not of charity only, but of self-interest, that might be answered by it; they considered no longer its just purpose and application, but stretched it to that officious sedulity, and extreme servility of adulation, which we too often observe and lament in polished life.

Hence, that infinite attention and consideration, which is so rigidly exacted, and so duly paid, in the commerce of the world: hence, that prostitution of mind which leaves a man no will, no sentiment, no principle, no character; all which disappear under the uniform exhibition of good manners: hence, those insidious arts, those studied disguises, those obsequious flatterers, nay, those multiplied and nicely-varied forms of insinuation and address, the direct aim of which may be to acquire the fame of politeness and good-breeding, but the certain effect to corrupt every virtue, to soothe every vanity, and to inflame every vice of the human heart.

These fatal mischiefs introduce themselves under the pretence and semblance of that humanity which the scriptures encourage and enjoin: but the genuine virtue is easily distinguished from the counterfeit, and by the following plain signs:

True politeness is modest, unpretending, and generous. It appears as little as may be; and when it does a courtesy, would willingly conceal it. It chooses silently to forego its own claims, not officiously to withdraw them. It engages a man to prefer his neighbour to himself; because he really esteems him; because he is tender of his reputation; because he thinks it more manly, more christian, to descend a little himself, than to degrade another. It respects in a word, the credit and estimation of his neighbour.

The mimic of this amiable virtue, false politeness, is, on the other hand, ambitious, servile, timorous. It affects popularity: is solicitous to please, and to be taken notice of. The man of this character does not offer, but obtrude his civilities because he would merit by this assiduity; because, in despair of winning regard by any worthier qualities, he would be sure to make the most of this; and lastly, because of all things, he would dread, by the omission of any punctilious observance, to give offence. In a word, this sort of politeness respects, for its immediate object, the favour and consideration of our neighbour.

2. Again; the man who governs himself by the spirit of the Apostle's precept, expresses his preference of another, in such a way as is worthy of himself: in all innocent compliances, in all honest civilities, in all decent and manly condescensions.

On the contrary, the man of the world, who who rests in the letter of this command, is regardless of the means by which he conducts himself. He respects neither his own dignity, nor that of human nature. Truth, reason, virtue, all are equally betrayed by this supple impostor. He assents to the errors, though the most pernicious; he applauds the follies, though the most ridiculous; he soothes the vices, though the most flagrant, of other men. He never contradicts, tho' in the softest form of insinuation; he never disapproves, though by a respectful silence; he never condemns, though it be only by a good example. In short, he is solicitous for nothing, but by some studied devices to hide from others, and, is it possible to palliate to himself the grossness of his illiberal adulation.

Lastly; we may be sure, that the ultimate ends for which these different objects are pursued, and by so different means, must also lie wide of each other.

Accordingly the true polite man would, by all proper testimonies of respect, promote the credit and estimation of his neighbour; because he sees that, by this generous consideration of each other, the peace of the world is, in a good degree, preserved; because he knows that these mutual attentions prevent animosities, soften the fierceness of men's manners, and dispose them to all the offices of benevolence and charity: because, in a word, the interests of society are best served by this conduct; and because he understands it to be his duty to love his neighbour.

The falsely polite, on the contrary, are anxious, by all means whatever, to procure the favour and consideration of those they converse with; because they regard, ultimately, nothing more than their private interest; because they perceive, that their own selfish designs are best carried on by such practices: in a word, because they love themselves.

Thus we see, that genuine virtue consults the honour of others by worthy means, and for the noblest purposes; the counterfeit solicits their favour by dishonest compliances, and for the basest end.

Hurd.

It is the infirmity of little minds to be taken with every appearance, and dazzled with every thing that sparkles; but great minds have but little admiration, because few things appear new to them.

The Temple of virtuous Love.

THE structure on the right hand was (as I afterwards found) consecrated to virtuous Love, and could not be entered, but by such as received a ring, or some token, from a person who was placed as a guard at the gate of it. He wore a garland of roses and myrtles on his head, and on his shoulders a robe like an imperial mantle, white and unspotted all over, excepting only, that where it was clasped at his breast, there were two golden turtle doves that buttoned it by their bills, which were wrought in rubies: he was called by the name of Hymen, and was seated near the entrance of the temple, in a delicious bower, made up of several trees that were embraced by woodbines, jessamines, and amaranths, which were so many emblems of marriage, and ornaments to the trunks that supported them.—As I was single and unaccompanied, I was not permitted to enter the temple, and for that reason am a stranger to all the mysteries that were performed in it. I had, however, the curiosity to observe, how the several couples that entered were disposed of; which was after the following manner; there were two great gates on the backside of the edifice, at which the whole crowd was let out. At one of these gates were two women, extremely beautiful, though in a different kind; the one having a very careful and composed air, the other a sort of smile and ineffable sweetness in her countenance: the name of the first was Discretion, and of the other Complacency. All who came out of this gate, and put themselves under the direction of these two sisters, were immediately conducted by them into gardens, groves, and meadows, which abounded in delights, and were furnished with every thing that could make them the proper seats of happiness. The second gate of this temple let out all the couples that were unhappily married; who came out linked together by chains, which each of them strove to break, but could not. Several of these were such as had never been acquainted with each other before they met in the great walk, or had been too well acquainted in the thicket. The entrance to this gate was possessed by three sisters, who joined themselves with these wretches, and occasioned most of their miseries. The youngest of the sisters was known by the name of Levity; who, with the innocence of a virgin, had the dress and behaviour of a harlot: the name of the second was Contention, who bore on her right arm a mufF made of the skin of a porcupine, and on her left carried a little lap-dog, that barked and snapped at every one that passed by her. The eldest of the sisters, who seemed to have an haughty and imperious air, was always accompanied with tawny Cupid, who generally marched before her with a little mace on his shoulder, the end of which was fashioned into the horns of a stag: her garments were yellow, and her complexion pale: her eyes were piercing, but had odd casts in them, and that particular distemper which makes persons who are troubled with it see objects double. Upon enquiry, I was informed that her name was Jealousy.

Cattler.

There is nothing so much worth as a mind well instructed.

A STORY

From the French of St. Lambert.

DURING the last wars in America, a party of Abenaki savages defeated an English detachment. The vanquished were unable to escape from an enemy more nimble in the course than they, and eager to pursue them; and were treated with a barbarity, of which there are few examples even in those countries.

A young English officer, pressed by two savages, that attacked him with uplifted hatchets, had no longer any hope of life; he thought only of selling his life at a high price. At this instant an old savage, armed with a bow, approached him, and prepared to pierce him with an arrow: but after having adjusted it, he suddenly dropped his bow, and threw himself between the young officer and the two barbarians who were going to massacre him: they retired with respect. The old man took the Englishman by the hand, reanimated him with his caresses, and conducted him to his cabin, where he always treated him with a sweetness that was never diminished. He made him less his slave than his companion. He taught him the language of the Abenakies, and the gross arts in use among the people. They both lived very contentedly with each other. One thing alone gave inquietude to the young Englishman: sometimes the old man fixed his eyes upon him, and after having regarded him, would shed tears.

At the return of Spring, the savages re-assumed their arms, and took the field. The old man, who was sufficiently robust to support the fatigues of war, set out with them, accompanied by his prisoner. The Abenakies made a march of more than two hundred leagues through the forests. At length they arrived at a plain, where they discovered an English camp. The old savage shewed it to the young man, and regarding his countenance, "behold thy brethren," said he; "these are they whom we seek to combat. Listen to me, I have saved thy life; I have taught thee to make a canoe, a bow and arrows, and to surprize the elk in the forest; to manage the hatchet, and to strike terror into the enemy.—What wast thou when I conducted thee into my cabin? Thy hands were those of an infant; they served neither to nourish nor to defend thee;—thy soul was enveloped in night; thou knewest nothing; to me thou owest all. Wouldest thou be so ungrateful as to re-unite thyself to thy brethren, and raise the hatchet against us?" The Englishman protested, that he had rather lose his life a thousand times, than shed the blood of an Abenaki.

The savage, bowing his head, covered his face with his hands; after having been some time in this attitude, he looked upon the young Englishman, and said to him in a tone of mixed tenderness and grief, "hast thou a father?" "He was alive," said the young man, "when I quitted my country." "Oh! how unhappy he is," exclaimed the savage; and after a moment of silence, he added, "knowest thou that I have been a father? I am one no more! I have seen my son fall in battle—he was by my side: he was covered with wounds when he fell. But I have avenged him: yes I have avenged him." He pronounced these words with energy; his whole body trembled; he was almost stifled with groans which he would not suffer to escape. His

eyes were wild. His tears flowed not. He calmed himself by degrees, and turning towards the east, where the sun was about to rise, he said to the young Englishman, "seest thou this beautiful sky, resplendent with light? Hast thou pleasure in regarding it?"—"Yes," said the Englishman, "I have pleasure in regarding this beautiful sky." "Ah! well, I regard it with pleasure no more," said the savage, shedding a torrent of tears. A moment after, he shewed the young man a tree, which was in full bloom.—"Seest thou this beautiful tree," said he: "hast thou pleasure in regarding it?"—"Yes, I have pleasure in regarding it."—"I regard it with pleasure no more," replied the savage, with precipitation; and immediately added, "depart; go into thy own country, and return to thy father, that he may yet take pleasure when he sees the sun rise in the morning, and the trees blossom in the Spring."

Madame Talleyrand and M. Denon.

MADAME la Princess de Benevento is what the French, with an incivility towards the brute creation, unworthy so polite a people, call *une bete*. On the failure of the Egyptian expedition, the then minister for foreign affairs was anxious to shew due honours to the *scavants* on their return, being himself a *scavan*. "*Ma cheer*," said he, one day to his lady. "M. Denon dines with me to-day; he is a great man; you must shew him some attention: he has written a book of travels that every body reads, full of charming plates—look over them, and pay him some compliments on his voyage." Accordingly, Madame Talleyrand repaired to the library, on her way to her toilette. "Monsieur," said she to the librarian, "I want a book of travels—every body reads it—full of charming plates—the author is—pscha! his name is—ends in *on*." "Ah! Madame, every body knows these travels; here they are, full of charming engravings." Being, therefore, qualified to do honour to her celebrated guest, she places him at a table at her right hand, and omits no mark of attention. "I have been reading your book. It is the prettiest and most amusing book I ever read: (the professor bowed very low) and how I pity your sufferings on the island." "We travellers learn to bear too much, Madame."—"But to cook your own victuals, and make your own clothes!" M. Denon looked embarrassed—"but how I do love that sweet, dear Friday!" The presence of the minister could hardly repress the laughter, which now became general, it being observed that madame had confounded Monsieur Denon with our famous countryman Robinson Crusoe—being only known on the continent by the name of Robinson. [Lon. Pap.]

Anecdote.

The soldiers of a certain English regiment were so addicted to plundering, that they stripped the inhabitants of the towns where they were quartered of every thing they could meet with. Some people having suffered considerably, went to demand satisfaction of the commanding officer. They severally related their complaints, and he attended to them with great patience. "Pray," said he, "did they leave any thing behind them?" "Oh! yes, please your honour, several things." "Then," he replied, "they were none of my soldiers."



Selected Poetry.

*For you ye fair I feel a joy divine,
To gather fruit and point you to the vine,*

Power of Affection.

*"Trifles in themselves,
Are to the feeling heart of greater worth,
Than India's richest gems."*

TOUCH'D by the magic hand of those we love,
A trifle will of consequence appear ;
A flow'r, a blade of grass, a pin, a glove,
A scrap of paper, will become most dear.

And is that being happy whose cold heart
Feels not, nor understands this source of joy ;
To whom a trifle can no joy impart ;
Who lose them, cast them by, deface, destroy ?

Yes, they are happy, if the insensate rocks
On which the ocean beats or softly laves
Rejoice, that they are hurt not by the shocks
Which hurl poor sailors to untimely graves.

Yes, they are happy, if the polish'd gem
On which the sun, in varied colours plays,
Rejoices that its lustre comes from him ;
And glows with rapture to reflect his rays.

Not else. Though hearts so exquisitely form'd
Feel agony a thousand different ways ;
Yet when by love, or friendship's power charm'd,
One moment's bliss, an age of pain repays.

One kind approving look, one cheerful smile,
Can from the mind each painful image blot ;
The voice that charms us, can all pain beguile,
List'ning the world beside is all forgot.

Tho' sharp the pang, which friendship slighted gives,
Tho' to the eye, fond tears may force their way ;
The cause remov'd, when hope again revives,
Light sits the "bosom's lord" and all is gay.

True, when obliged to part from those we love,
'Tis like the pang, when soul and body's riven ;
But when we meet, the spirit soars above,
And tastes the exquisite delights of heaven.

Be mine the feeling heart ; for who would fear
To pass the dreary vale of death's abode ;
If certain at the end they should be near,
And feel the smile of a benignant God.

Anecdote.

The humorous Dean Swift, whose antipathy to fishing was well known, having been asked by a little child, what a fishing rod meant—"it means, my dear," said he, "only a long pole, with a fool at one end, and a worm at the other."

History of Miranda's Expedition.

OLIVER & MUNROE,

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THE HISTORY OF MIRANDA'S LATE ATTEMPT TO REVOLUTIONIZE SOUTH-AMERICA.

In a series of letters by a gentleman who was an officer in the enterprise, to his friend in the United States.

The manuscript has been inspected by several gentlemen of taste and literary eminence, who pronounce it a highly valuable and interesting work. The merit of it alone, would entitle it to the patronage of the public ; but when it is remembered that Gen. Miranda is now in England, making preparations for going again to South America, and that Col. Burr is now on his passage there, it cannot fail to excite particular attention. It is thus noticed by a member of the Legislature of Massachusetts to the Editor of the North Star.

"A young gentleman whom I knew five years ago as an officer in the navy of the U. States, and which he left honorably, has lately returned from Miranda's expedition, into which he had been seduced by falsehood ; and has shewn me a history of that enterprise in detail from the day of leaving New-York until its dissolution. The unstudied simplicity of the narrative carries conviction of its truth—I have advised its publication : so have other gentlemen of more deserving weight of character than myself. It has so much of incident that it will engage the curious reader ; so much of extravagance as to seize on the adventurous ; so much of disaster as to fix on sensibility and carries proof of such depraved hypocrisy in the leader as to interest every lover of truth. Because I wish every tub to stand on its own bottom, I wish this exposure should go to the public. "Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's."

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